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RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2063
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TAGS: [ASEC](#) [KCRM](#) [KDEM](#) [KE](#) [PGOV](#) [PINR](#) [PREL](#) [PTER](#)
SUBJECT: MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT FROM MUNGIKI-LAND: "I'M
SCARED"

REF: NAIROBI 2215 AND PREVIOUS

Classified By: PolCouns Andre for reasons 1.5 B & D.

¶1. (C) Summary: Member of Parliament Elias Mbau recounts his own intimidation by the Mungiki in his constituency. He frankly admits that he was forced to change his tune after initially publicly opposing the criminal organization. He also confirms reports that the Mungiki have supporters in government and the police. The issue is likely to remain a key election campaign topic. In typical Kenyan political fashion, the issue is commonly viewed through an ethnic lens: "Can a Kikuyu-dominated government, which includes some Mungiki-compromised figures, successfully rein in a Kikuyu criminal organization?" End Summary.

¶2. (U) PolCouns met with NARC-K (pro-government) Member of Parliament for Maragua Constituency (Central Province) Elias Mbau to discuss the status of the Mungiki criminal organization in his district (reftel). Mbau was visibly upset by the recent intensification of Mungiki violence in the area. Three of the four beheadings attributed to Mungiki this week took place in Murang'a North District, which borders his constituency. The victims' heads were placed on poles erected outside a police station and a chief's compound as a warning to the authorities to desist from the anti-Mungiki crackdown. Chiefs are employees of the Provincial Administration and Internal Security and serve as the lowest level of provincial administration.

¶3. (C) Mbau claimed to have spoken publicly against the Mungiki on several occasions in 2003 and 2004. He said, "Well wishers then warned me that it was unsafe for me to be in my own constituency after 6 PM." He confirmed that Mungiki has sympathizers within the ranks of the political leadership, the police and the provincial administration, though he declined to name names. He added, "What can I do? My constituents complain about Mungiki activities, but they also complain when the police come in and arrest all young men in the area. I do not want to be associated with the Mungiki, but neither do I want them to consider me their enemy. I have a family to think of."

¶4. (C) Recent police dragnets have picked up over 500 young men in Central province. Arrestees are vetted and those without Mungiki ties are generally released within a day, sometimes after rough handling, according to press reports. Mbau pointed out, "Real Mungiki spend less time behind bars than do the innocent young men picked up with them. Mungiki

get quickly bailed out by their organization. They are very efficient."

15. (C) Mbau expressed frustration with the recent dropping of charges against Mungiki leader Maina Njenga. He sides with Internal Security Minister Michuki in his public war of words with Chief Justice Gicheru concerning who is responsible for the government's failure to curb the Mungiki. "Michuki is right. The courts always release the Mungiki and then they come after whoever was responsible for arresting them. The local police have learned that it is useless and dangerous to oppose the Mungiki."

16. (C) Asked what would be the best course of action, Mbau said, "the government must realize that the Mungiki are a threat. They sided with Uhuru (Kenyatta) in 2002 (against Mwai Kibaki, who won the election and is now Kenya's President, Kenyatta is now the official leader of the opposition). They can control the vote in the government's most reliable province. They must send in the GSU (General Services Unit) and the Administrative Police to arrest the leaders and then find a way to keep them in prison." (NOTE: The GSU and the Administrative Police are specialized security units under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. END NOTE.) Mbau added glumly, 'Until that happens, I have no choice but to try to get along with them. In a recent public meeting I could see the Mungiki members in the crowd. I told my constituents: 'I know that many people criticize the Mungiki. But the Mungiki in Maragua constituency are good people.' I hated doing that, but what choice do I have?"

Comment: Turning the Tide Requires Leadership

17. (C) Mbau voiced a common quandary of politicians and officials in Kikuyu-inhabited, Mungiki-dominated areas of the country. He seems sincere in wanting to oppose the Mungiki. However, he realizes their strength and he knows that he cannot depend on the police, the courts and officialdom to back him up should he again publicly oppose them. To change the Mungiki-friendly behaviour of politicians like Mbau requires leadership at senior levels of government to remove Mungiki sympathizers from the police and the courts and then pursue a coordinated strategy to curb the organization, focussing on its mid-level and executive-level management. Arrests of the rank and file will not produce lasting results.

18. (SBU) Voters are expressing their fear and anger to their representatives. Religious and civil society leaders are speaking out against the so far ineffective government response to Mungiki violence. Mungiki stories now feature daily in the press. We have privately added our voices to those calling for the application of the rule of law against the leadership of Mungiki. The issue is now front and center in Kenya. It is likely to remain so throughout the election campaign period. In typical Kenyan political fashion, the issue is commonly viewed through an ethnic lens: "Can a Kikuyu-dominated government, which includes some Mungiki-compromised figures, successfully rein in a Kikuyu criminal organization?" The police recently picked up former Member of Parliament for Nakuru David Manyara for questioning. There are reports that they are also interviewing some serving officials and politicians as well. This is an encouraging sign.

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